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Security Incident Summary Report- NBME Candidate Arson Attempt

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Summary

At approximately 9:15AM on Monday, August 8th, a NBME STEP 2 candidate attempted to start a fire in the ladies restroom at Prometric Headquarters. The candidate was testing at test center #5001 in the Prometric HQ building in Baltimore, MD. Two Prometric corporate employees were witnesses to the attempt and identified the candidate. The Baltimore City Police and Fire Investigators responded promptly and led the investigation.

Conclusion

The candidate was arrested, and the officers informed Prometric Management that she was going to be charged with arson. Her father was also present during the incident, but was released by the Police after being interviewed. All other candidates continued to test normally, no other candidates' exams were affected by the incident. The details of the incident are below.

Facts and Evidence Discussion

- The candidate is identified as Maria Mahmood, DOB [REDACTED], and lives at 14717 Exbury Land in Laurel, MD. (P) [REDACTED]; e-mail: [REDACTED]
- Ms. Mahmood was taking the NBME STEP 2 Exam, Conf. #63859050, appointment time 9AM. She was checked in for her appointment at 8:52AM and tested until 9:06AM when she took her first break to go to the restroom.
- Prometric HR Manager Lisa Trusty was in the 13th floor ladies room at approximately 9:10 AM. When she exited the stall she saw Ms. Mahmood standing at the sink closest to the back wall. Lisa and Ms. Mahmood were the only 2 individuals in the ladies room at this time.
- Ms. Mahmood was observed by Lisa cleaning out a small plastic container. Then she removed a plastic zip loc bag that appeared to have wet paper towels in it. When she opened the bag, Lisa noticed it smelled very strong, "like chemicals". Ms. Mahmood had her back slightly turned to Lisa at this time. Ms. Mahmood then went into one of

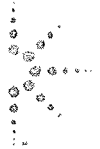
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the stalls, closed the door and appeared to just stand there. She did not sit down or appear to use the bathroom. Lisa exited the ladies room at this time.

- Prometric Software Developer, Suzette Guay, entered the ladies room. She and Lisa passed by each other while entering and exiting the restroom. Ms. Mahmood was exiting the stall when Suzette entered. While Suzette entered a stall, she observed Ms. Mahmood go to the sink countertop. Through the door, Suzette could see and hear Ms. Mahmood using the sink. She appeared to use the water several times, but did not use soap or the paper towel dispenser. Suzette then observed and heard Ms. Mahmood quickly exit the restroom.
- When Suzette exited the stall, she observed what appeared to be paper towels stuck to the wall, underneath the sink countertop where Ms. Mahmood was standing, with an attached string hanging down from them (Property Management has provided photos of this). The string was on fire, moving its way up toward the towels stuck to the wall. Suzette quickly wet some paper towels and threw them at the string to put the fire out. She briefly thought that the string could have been a wire. She put the fire out, and then went to go notify management about the incident.
- With another co-worker, Suzette went up to the 14th floor to notify Facilities Manager, Joe Shiels. Joe was not in his office at this time, so the receptionist notified Dave Smith with Canton Crossing Property Management, COPT. Dave and his agents went to the 13th floor to meet Suzette and examine the ladies restroom.
- After examining the restroom and burned materials, Dave secured the restroom and called the police and fire department.
- Suzette thought that the woman in the restroom could have been a testing candidate since she didn't recognize her as an employee, and the test center is on the 13th floor. The property managers advised her to go into the test center to see if she can identify the woman she saw in the restroom.
- Suzette entered the test center, and spoke with the Test Center Manager, Audrey Boston, about the situation. When Suzette looked in the test room, she saw the woman she had seen in the bathroom was just exiting the Special Accommodations Room. The woman was identified as Maria Mahmood. Suzette advised Audrey that this candidate had started a fire in the ladies room.
- Suzette then went to notify HR that someone in the test center had started a fire. This notification was quickly escalated to Kewin Gales, Senior VP of HR, who notified Tony Scicchitano – General Counsel, and Charlie Kernan, COO.
- In the test center Ms. Mahmood was experiencing technical problems with her Special Accommodations Monitor, so she had exited the S/A Room. She was waiting in the reception area for the issue to be resolved. While she was waiting, Tony, Nancy Patterson, and Marc Spiker entered the test center and asked her to wait in the private observation room while her technical problem was resolved. At this time they removed her backpack and cell phone and

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gave those to the Police. She was initially reluctant to give up her cell phone, but was convinced that her testing client could consider it a security breach if she kept her cell phone after her exam had started.

- **Details on the Technical Issue** - *Ms. Mahmood had arranged for an extra large screen monitor and Zoom Text, but she was not actually scheduled to test in the S/A room. She was to use this equipment at a normal workstation. Another candidate had arrived who was scheduled for the S/A room. The TCAs were attempting to move Ms. Mahmood's monitor to the main testing area, when the monitor stand broke. They were able to place the monitor on the stand so it was still viewable. However, Ms. Mahmood said she would be moving the monitor a lot and wanted a new monitor. The TCAs asked her to wait in the reception area while they tried to resolve the issue.*
- After being questioned for a few minutes, the Police Officers moved Ms. Mahmood to Prometric's Sydney Conference Room for further questioning.
- At this same time, Roddy Meade and the other police officers escorted Ms. Mahmood's father, who had been waiting in the 13th floor hallway, to Prometric's Kuala Lumpur Conference room so he could be questioned separately.
- The police then questioned Lisa Trusty and Suzette Guay about what they had seen in the restroom.
- At approx 11:00AM, Ms. Mahmood was taken into custody by the Police for interrogation at the Southeast District Police Station. Sgt. Maggio said she would be further questioned at the station, and then charged under Report #CC H3605. Sgt. Maggio advised that Prometric and COPT could obtain a copy of the report in a few days.
- About 5 minutes after Ms. Mahmood was taken from the test center by the Police, the Test Center Manager, Audrey Boston, discovered a small zip lock bag with paper towels in it stuck between the candidate lockers and the wall. This bag was given to the Police officers still on site as additional evidence.
- Candidates were not permitted to take breaks in the lobby area while this investigation was underway. A few female candidates exited the test center to use the restroom. They were escorted by Prometric managers to the ladies room on the 14th floor, and back to the test center. All candidates continued their exams during the incident.
- Prometric Security has procured and reviewed the test center surveillance footage. The footage was reviewed with special attention to the locker area where she presumably hid the zip lock bag with the paper towels. She cannot be seen hiding paper towels next to her locker. The footage shows normal testing procedures and actions leading up to the problem with her monitor, and her eventual removal from the test center by management after the arson attempt had been discovered
- Prometric sent a notification of the incident to all clients who had candidates testing in the center on August 8th.

Next Steps

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- A detailed report of the incident is being sent to NBME the week of August 15th for their review and disciplinary actions with the candidate.
- Sgt. Maggio from the Southeast District advised Prometric and COPT that he would be delivering a copy of the Police Report on Tuesday, August 16th.
- Prometric's Senior Management will review the entire incident and our handling of it on August 17th. We will identify any opportunities for improvement in our incident response procedures at that time.